**Strengthening Coastline in Lakshadweep Island**

1366. SHRI SURESH KALMADI:
DR. MOHAN BABU:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Coast Guard have apprehended four Pakistani vessels with 49 crew members after a hot chase near Cheetlatt Island of the sensitive Lakshadweep coast;

(b) whether in the absence of State and Central Government surveillance in the area, the sensitive islands have become a haven for ISI men who mingle with the local population; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and steps taken to strengthen vigil in the coastline?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Coast Guard ship 'Vigraha' had apprehended four Pakistani vessels along with 49 fishermen on 12.2.2000 in the area of Lakshadweep group of islands.

(b) and (c) Preliminary investigations/interrogations of the apprehended crew do not indicate ISI involvement in this case. Indian Navy and the Coast Guard are maintaining regular surveillance in the area to prevent violation of our exclusive economic zone and other unlawful and anti-national activities. Coast Guard ships and aircraft are tactically deployed in sensitive areas to neutralise movement of any anti-national element through sea route.